MR. CHAIRMAN: Question no. 545.

Utilization of Sea Water

*545. SHRI BACHANI LEKHRAJ : Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have received any proposal for utilization of sea water by the process of Reverse Osmosis Plant for supplying water to Kutch region in Gujarat;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) by when a final decision is likely to be taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI ARJUN CHARAN SETHI): (a) to (c) A statement is laid on the table of the House.

Statement

Utilization of Sea Water

(d) No proposal for utilization of sea water by Reverse Osmosis plant process for supplying water to Kutch region in Gujarat has been received by the Ministry of Water Resources.

(a) and (c) Do not arise.

SHRI BACHANI LEKHRAJ : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister, looking at the acute shortage of water in Kutch area of Gujarat, which is surrounded by sea and salty desert, will the Government at least agreed to consider any such process for utilization of sea water, as it is being utilised by United Arab Emirates, Qatar and other countries?

SHRI ARJUN CHARAN SETHI: Sir, the reply to the question asked by my hon. friend is: 'No proposal for utilization of sea water by Reverse Osmosis Plant process for supplying water to Kuch region in Gujarat has been received by the Ministry of Water Resources'. And, reply to 'b' and 'c' is: 'Do not arise'. Sir, as far as the question asked by the hon. Member in regard to the projects to utilise the sea water is concerned, in the year 1998, power had been delegated to the States to plan, execute and maintain individual water supply schemes. So, now it is not under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Water Resources or the Government of India. It is upto the States; they are to plan, execute and maintain individual projects, which they deem fit under the scheme.

SHRI BACHANI LEKHRAJ: Availability of water must be considered by the Government of India. And, when there is no other source in the Kutch

area, which is surrounded by sea and desert, what is the harm, what is the difficulty to the Government to consider any such process for utilization of sea water which is being utilised in other countries of the world?

SHRJ ARJUN CHARAN SETHI: Sir, the Ministry of Rural Development has reported that about 150 Reverse Osmosis Plants have been commissioned throughout the country. Out of these 150 plants, 77 are functioning. In Gujarat, out of the 12 plants installed, one plant is now functioning. It is very costly. That is why it becomes very difficult for the State Governments to maintain it.

SHRI G.K. VASAN : Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether a similar proposal for utilisation of sea water for regular water supply has been received from the Government of Tamil Nadu. If there is any proposal, what is the response of the Central Government?

SHRI ARJUN CHARAN SETHI: Sir, as I have already stated, this power has been delegated to the State Governments in the year 1998. Therefore, it is up to the State Governments. They can plan, execute and maintain the project.

श्री सतीश प्रधान : सभापति जी, जैसा कि मंत्री जी ने बताया कि यह स्टेट गवर्नमेंट का सब्जेक्ट हैं, यह ठीक है लेकिन आज की परिस्थिति पानी के बारे में बहुत बुरी हैं । लोगों को पीने के लिए पानी नहीं मिल रहा है । हिन्दुस्तान में सूखे की स्थिति सब जगह निर्मित हुई हैं । ऐसी परिस्थितियों में हमारे पास जहां कहीं भी पानी हैं उसका ठीक ढंग से इस्तेमाल करने की आवश्यकता है । सभापति जी, मैं बताना चाहता हूं कि...(व्यवधान)....

श्री सभापति :बताइए मत, इनसे पूछिए ।

श्री सतीश प्रधान: सभापति जी, पूछने के लिए ही बता रहा हूं । हमारे यहां वाटर रिसाइक्लिंग करने की तकनीक अस्तित्व में हैं । ओ.एन.जी.सी. ऐसी तकनीक का इस्तेमाल करती है ।पानी रिसाइकल करके, यूज करके पीने के पानी के रूप में काम आता है । सरकार सिर्फ यह नहीं कह सकती कि यह स्टेट गवर्नमेंट का सब्जेक्ट हैं । सूखे के बाद यह आपका सब्जेक्ट भी हो जाता है, सूखा हमारा सब्जेक्ट भी हो सकता है । मैं यह पूछना चाहता हूं कि आप इस विषय में आगे कदम क्यों नहीं बढ़ा रहे हैं ?

SHRI ARJUN CHARAN SETHI: Sir, it is a fact that scarcity of water throughout the country has become very acute now. So, the Ministry of Water Resources is providing whatever financial requirement against viable projects the states proposed to us. Certainly, we are providing funds. The Minisrty of Rural Development is also making provisions in different ways. This problem

can be solved only with the cooperation of the State Governments. Otherwise, even if we are determined to solve the water problem in this country, it is difficult. At the same time, the Central Government and the State Governments should cooperate on this particular issue.

Review of rate of interest by RBI

*546. SHRI LAL1T SURI : Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(b) whether the Reserve Bank of India proposes to review the 4 per cent rate of interest on savings bank accounts being paid at present by the commercial banks in view of the fact that inflation rate has recently crossed the 6 per cent level; and

(a) if so, by when a decision in this regard is likely to be taken ?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH) : (a) and (b) A Statement is placed on the Table of the House.

Statement

Review of Rate of Interest by RBI

(a) and (b) Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has informed that except for interest on savings bank accounts other bank deposit rates have been deregulated. These rates are kept under constant review and adjusted according to prevailing macro-economic and market conditions. Recent changes in the savings deposit rate made by the Reserve Bank are given below :

Rate of interest on Savings Deposits

Effective from	Rate (Per cent Per Annum)
November 01,1994	4.5
April 01,2000	4.0
March 01,2003	3.5

The recent cut in the savings deposit rate was effected following the announcement of reduction in the small savings rates by the Government. The present savings deposit rate is slightly higher than the average inflation rate of 3.34 per cent for 2002-2003.

SHRI LALIT SURI: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Hon'ble Minister has, in his reply, stated that the interest rates on the savings are going down gradually. There has always been a difference of about two per cent between the rate of